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## Key Leader Engagement Part III: USARPAC

*Initial Bilateral talks to enhance regional security and economic growth in the Pacific Region.*



On May 8, 2023 the Honorable Governor Lemanu P. S. Mauga met with U.S. Army Pacific Commanding General Charles A. Flynn to discuss American Samoa's future plans on establishing itself as a hub for the U.S. in the Pacific region.

The rising power and influence of China in the Pacific region prompted the Honorable Governor Lemanu to take preliminary steps to build up American Samoa's defense economically and

strategically. As the U.S. Territories are the doorstep in the United States it is only imperative that American Samoa initiate a strong partnership with key leaderships promoting regional security presence and deter potential adversaries. Additionally, the discussion overarches the opportunity to strengthen relationships between the United States and the Pacific Region through maximizing future opportunities.

Three important topics were discussed during the meeting:

- General Commander's decision to deploy a civil affairs team to conduct an assessment in American Samoa, with the aim of assisting in the development of better strategic planning capabilities.
- Furthermore, the discussion also encompassed the issue of Space A military travel options that were suspended amidst the pandemic. Facilitating the commencement of Space A, specifically the C17 and C130 flights, has the potential to provide travel options for both military personnel and veterans,
- The potential presence of the National Guard to provide support as needed. An upcoming meeting among Commanders is scheduled this week wherein General Flynn will address the issue with National Guard leadership.

These actions demonstrate the government's commitment to supporting American Samoa and improving its strategic readiness.

The Honorable Governor Lemanu P. S. Mauga presented a Samoan gift to both the General Commander and spouse. The same gesture was afforded to the Honorable Governor and First Lady Ella Mauga. MAJ Jerrod T. Avegalio, a Leone native from the Avegalio family, assisted the Honorable Governor and A.S. delegation to meet with the Command General. Avegalio has expressed his passion in Aviation and seeks to serve as an instrument for empowering aspiring soldiers from American Samoa in their pursuit of military excellence.

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